

**Curricular Plan for Writing Workshop**  
**Grade 5**  
**Unit 8: Informational Writing**  
**Reading, Research, and Writing in the Content Areas**

Students should understand and be able to:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write and produce research reports that express their understanding of new content</li> <li>• Write about topics from across many texts with engagement and purpose</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in partnerships to deepen their understanding and grow ideas about the content</li> <li>• Write an informative or explanatory piece that teaches others about what they learned in a content area</li> <li>• Develop topics with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or examples</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

Mentor Texts

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variety of nonfiction materials: expository nonfiction, narrative nonfiction, maps, primary documents, digital texts, and even images</li> <li>• TCRWP articles</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time For Kids articles</li> <li>• Content area books</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

Possible Teaching Points

*Part One: Writing to Develop Expertise and Grow Ideas in Reading or Content-Area Workshop*  
(W.5.2, W.5.2a, W.5.2b, W.5.2d, W.5.2e, W.5.4, W.5.8, W.5.7, W.5.9b)

- Social scientists write in many ways for many purposes. We can do this by:
  - Purposefully writing to capture what we are learning and thinking to grow our ideas.
  - Writing about things we observe.
    - Record in great detail all that you observe while studying a document/drawing from the time period you are studying.
- Social scientists go back to notes, observations, and/or sketches they have recorded while studying content area and write in words about what they have seen. We can do this by:
  - Using prompts such as, “I notice...I see...This reminds me of...”
  - Thinking like a social scientist.
    - Consider: cause and effect, compare and contrast, evaluating, drawing inferences
- Social scientists write observations they want their reader to be able to picture. They...
  - Write about every little thing they see.
  - Use very precise words/vocabulary.
  - Add every emotion possible.

- Describe what it feels like.
- Social scientists add all that they can add to their sketches in both words and images.
- Social scientist use note taking strategies to record content information.
  - Boxes and bullets (main idea and supporting facts)
  - Annotated timeline
  - Read a chunk of text, think, “What is the most important part?”, and jot it down!
  - Keep the topic of inquiry in mind and return to the book for more notes.
- Social scientists help their future readers by writing their ideas that come with the research they have begun to collect in their notebooks.
- Social scientists develop their ideas by asking themselves
  - “What do I think about this?”
  - “What is important about this?”

*Part Two: Writing to Develop a Research Base of Knowledge and to Deepen Our Expertise in a Topic in Reading or Content-Area Workshop  
(W.5.2, W.5.2a, W.5.2b, W.5.2d, W.5.2e, W.5.4, W.5.8, W.5.7, W.5.9b)*

- Historians often use their notebooks to question and wonder.
  - Begin questions with *why* or *how*.
- Historians think through possible answers.
  - “Maybe...”
  - “Could it be...?”
  - “But what about...?”
- Historians not only write about what they observe but also what they *think* about those observations.
  - Look back over the writing you have collected in your notebooks.
  - Write long about what you are thinking or realizing.
  - Use prompts such as “One thing I know ..., another thing I know...,” then “This makes me realize...”, “This helps me understand...”, or “I used to think...but now I know...”
- Historians use graphic organizers to help guide them as they jot while they read.
  - Post-it notes on the text as you read
  - Boxes and bullets
  - Using headings and subheadings

- Historians write reflections in their notebooks. We can do this by:
  - Looking over our notes.
  - Writing entries that describe new understanding.
  - Writing about our emotions.
    - “What did you find upsetting?”
    - “What do you admire?”
- Historians use sentence starters such as,
  - *Some people think... but I think...*
  - *In other words...*
  - *Another way to say this is...*
- Historians prioritize the research they gather, determining which research is most important to include. We can do this by:
  - Ranking the information.
  - Noticing -er words, such as *longer, greater, smaller* as a way to prioritize
  - Noticing words like *most* and *least* or phrases like *most influential* or *least effective*
- Historians cite research correctly and put research in their own words when they use it in their own piece of writing.

*Part Three: Studying Mentors and Writing Drafts of Research Reports in Writing Workshop*

(W.5.1a, W.5.1b, W.5.1c, W.5.1d, W.5.2, W.5.2a, W.5.2c, W.5.2d, W.5.2e, W.5.4, W.5.5, w.5.7, W.5.8, W.5.9, W.5.9b, W. 5.10)

- Notebooks are valuable resources filled with thoughts, wonderings, observations, and conclusions. We can use this information to:
  - Help inspire us.
  - Assist in elaboration.
  - Take detailed drawings or diagrams and use them on a new page with text underneath.
- Historians look back to their notebooks to:
  - Use more precise vocabulary.
  - Help elaborate on other parts of pages, like captions or labels.
- Historians benefit from writing partnerships to make their writing stronger. They do this by:
  - Giving ideas for what information would be helpful to include.
  - Asking questions, “Did that make sense? Do you feel like something is missing? What questions do you still have about my topic?”
- Historians read back over their own work to make sure it is focused.

*Part Four: Revising, Editing, and Publishing to Get Ready To Teach Others in Writing Workshop*  
(W.5.2, W.5.2a, W.5.2b, W.5.2d, W.5.2e, W.5.4, W.5.8, W.5.5, W.5.6, W.5.7, W.5.9b L.5.2a, L.5.2c, L.5.3a, L.5.4a, L.5.6)

- Historians lay out all they have done and choose the best parts to turn into a research report. We can do this by thinking, “Would others be interested in reading about this?” Then they revise, edit, and publish!
- Historians turn to their mentors to assist in revisions. We do this by,
  - Writing partner sentences; assisting one another on elaborating on an idea
  - Looking at sequencing, vocabulary, charts, timelines, etc.
  - Paying attention to spelling and punctuation.
- Historians go back to see if their paragraphs have a clear topic sentence and supporting details.
  - Are the boxes and bullets clear to the reader?
  - Should you split a paragraph into two smaller ones where each one has a distinct idea?
- Historians revise their headings and subheadings. We can do this by thinking,
  - “Would a new subheading help the reader understand this part of the text better?”
  - “Would a table of contents benefit the reader?”
  - “Did I alert the reader to the diagram?”
- Historians revise by making insertions.
  - Add a new text feature (text box, illustrations, etc).
  - Include a title and cover.
- Before the final edit, historians think,
  - “Is this report clearly teaching the reader something?”
  - “Am I ready to publish?”
- Historians fancy up their writing.
  - Include real photographs.
  - Include a drawing.
  - Add more details and color to pictures and diagrams.
  - Put in bold or underline important vocabulary words.

### Helpful Tips

- Before delving into this unit you will need to decide if you want your students to form groups around one topic of inquiry or if you want each student to look over the whole topic then zero in on one topic to study in depth.
- You could offer ideas for subtopics from content area, such as life in the colonies or thematic strands such as people, places and environment or power, authority and governance.
- It is imperative that you read aloud, do shared reading, and shared writing of nonfiction.
- This unit is a culmination of all the informational writing students have been working on throughout the year, from the informational book unit to content writing.
- It is a time for repeated practice and opportunity to put all these writing moves together to create one large product.
- In preparing for this unit, make a decision on what role the students' past writing pieces will play.
- The social studies content you choose should be engaging. The content should lend itself to many subtopics within the main topic.
- It will be important to keep a strong reading and content area workshop.
- It may be best to begin the content-area reading unit a week or two before launching this unit.
- Encourage students to trade notebooks once a week and write to each other in their notebooks, responding to each other's research, reflections, and ideas.
- Have students practice paraphrasing.
  - Write the research fact on an index card and then rewrite it from memory on the other side of the card.
  - Write a research example that needs to be paraphrased at the top of a piece of paper and then have the research group play 'Telephone' by each taking turns to change something as they pass the notebook around the group.

## Common Core State Standards

**W. 5.2a** Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically; include formatting, illustrations and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

**W. 5.2b** Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.

**W.5.2c** Link ideas within and across categories of information using words, phrases, and clauses.

**W.5.2d** Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

**W.5.2e** Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation

**L.5.2a** Use punctuation to separate items in a series

**L.5.2c** Use a comma to set off the words *yes* and *no*, to set off a tag question from the rest of the sentence, and to indicate direct address

**L.5.3a** Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.

**L.5.4a** Use context and comparisons in text as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

**L.5.6** Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships.

**W.5.4** Produce a clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.

**W.5.5** With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

**W.5.6** With some guidance and support from adults, use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of two pages in a single sitting.

**W.5.7** Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

**W.5.8** Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.

**W.5.9b** Apply grade 5 Reading standards to informational texts

**W.5.10** Write routinely over extended time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes and audiences.